

FOREWORD

As with twelve previous volumes in the Working Papers in the Humanities series, *Ritual Economies* is a provisional end-product. Its production follows from the long and numerous hours logged by its editor and his two main supports at the Humanities Research Group: Research Associate Rosemary Halford and secretarial assistant Vera Furmanek. The book would be poorer in quality without their dedicated labours, and in fact owes its beginnings to their efforts in arranging and facilitating the visits that the Distinguished Speakers made to the University of Windsor between October 2003 and March 2004.

I should note that there were five Speakers in total (Richard Cavell, William Doty, Ronald Grimes, Calin-Andrei Mihailescu, and Penne Restad), but that the talk delivered by Professor Mihailescu doesn't appear in this volume due to the time-consuming nature of his responsibilities as Director of The Centre for Theory and Criticism at the University of Western Ontario. For the essays that do appear, Rosemary and Vera took numerous pains to follow my instructions, which sometimes came thick and fast and none too clear, and in the end improved *Ritual Economies* with judicious suggestions of their own. They carefully formatted the essays, cross-checked references, spellings, and foreign usages, and were helpful consultants on a few significant matters relating to the texts themselves. Under the auspices of the Human Resources Development Canada Summer Career Program 2003, Suzanne Bebbington worked on developing the "Suggested Further Readings" at the end of this book. This list is effectively a bibliography, but it is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it intersperses some canonical titles among books and articles that reflect dominant currents in recent ritual studies.

Ritual Economies is in every sense a volume made up of "working papers." The Speakers' contributions, compounded out of continuing research and reflection, are bound to incorporate unrevised contingencies. I hope that readers bear this same point in mind when progressing through my own long, introductory essay. There are numerous footnotes in the book, and, as invariably happens, minor inconsistencies or errors have no doubt gone undetected despite the vigilance of the editorial team.

All those that I have mentioned are well-deserving of my gratitude. But a final "thank you" is also reserved for my brother Otto Buj for his cover design. Faced with an oddly compounded title, *Ritual Economies*, Otto came up with a flipped text-setting and a graphic that operates on multiple levels. The all-seeing eye beaming out from the apex of a tipped pyramid is taken from the American dollar bill. Its masonic signifiers probably mystify many

of those who pause to study the dollar, but the imagery is unmistakably ritual in import. The cover foregrounds hermetic symbols and abstruse ceremonies. But it also reminds us of the ubiquity of commerce, and in doing so it advances the view that our modern, post-Enlightenment economy has always been a money cult, and never as stable as we might wish.

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